

**-D R A F T-**

**THE FALLS CHURCH/  
JAMES LEE/SOUTHGATE  
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
AND CONSERVATION PLAN**

(This plan is an update of the original plan. The effectiveness of the controls, regulations, and standards of the original Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan from December 8, 1980 all remain in effect unless superseded by this updated plan.)

Please contact Joel Franklin at 703-246-5163 to request a hardcopy version of the original Falls Church/James Lee/ Southgate Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan



**March 1, 2006**

**Department of Housing  
& Community Development**

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Attachment 1: Original Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan

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## **DRAFT James Lee Conservation Plan – 3/1/06**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Falls Church, James Lee, Southgate community, known also as simply the James Lee Community, is a residential community located on either side of Annandale Road between Route 50 and Route 29/211. While the majority of the area is located in Fairfax County, a small portion is located within the corporate boundaries of the City of Falls Church. Fairfax County and City of Falls Church have an existing cooperation agreement on housing and community development activities within the City of Falls Church. The James Lee community is bounded on the north by Hillwood Avenue and South Washington Street; on the east by the Hillwood Square Apartments and Whittier Park Town Homes; on the west by the Tripps Run Stream Valley; on the southeast by Clearview Drive and on the southwest by James Lee Street.

The community is characterized by irregular size lots and housing ranging in age from the pre-1900's to post-2000. In terms of property ownership and value, the neighborhood is relatively stable. Real estate sales on single-family detached homes and vacant property have remained relatively constant indicating a low rate of turnover for existing housing and vacant land in the neighborhood. Most vacant lots have sold quickly since 1995 and few undeveloped lots remain. Most new construction is infill residential development on vacant lots or demolition and rebuilding of new homes.

The original Neighborhood Improvement Program that was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 8, 1980, provided a comprehensive approach to preserving and improving the James Lee Community as a viable residential neighborhood for a twenty-five year period. Title 36 of the Code of Virginia provides the legal authority for the establishment of Conservation Areas. The Conservation Plan is to provide an outline for the conservation of the area and indicate, among other things, its relationship to local objectives relating to appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities, and other public improvements; conditions and limitations on acquisition of property; or any conditions and limitations, including time limitation, under which properties shall be made available for rehabilitation or redevelopment.

The original Neighborhood Improvement Program for the James Lee Community included recommendations for funding public projects, such as road, storm drainage and sidewalk improvements, as well as improvements to the James Lee Community Center and recommendations for joint public and private participation in the Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP). The Conservation Plan and Neighborhood Improvement Program promoted confidence in the future of James Lee by:

- reducing uncertainty about land use plans for the area;
- providing public improvements which made the neighborhood more attractive and which reinforced a sense of community; and
- made available low-cost financing which provided an incentive to homeowners to improve their property.

The ultimate success of the Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan

depended largely on the extent of public and private confidence in the community and on the extent of citizen support for the program. During the twenty-five year period since the adoption of the James Lee Conservation Plan, federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, County General Funds, and Neighborhood Improvement General Obligation Bond funds have been used to complete several road and storm drainage projects and to provide home improvement loans to residents of the James Lee Conservation Area. While much has been accomplished, representatives of the James Lee Community expressed a desire to maintain their Conservation Area status and to update the content of the Conservation Plan. The civic association representing the neighborhood requested that the Conservation Plan be extended in order to continue to address additional needs of their communities.

On November 21, 2005, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted a temporary extension of the James Lee Conservation Plan to allow adequate time for the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) and the Board of Supervisors to hold public hearings on a proposal to amend the James Lee Conservation Plan to extend the expiration date by six months. The Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on that proposed extension amendment on January 9, 2006, and afterward approved the amendment to permit extension of the Plan to June 15, 2006. The FCRHA public hearing occurred on January 12, 2006, and the FCRHA likewise approved the amendment permitting extension of the Plan to June 15, 2006. Since a portion of the Conservation Plan is located in the City of Falls Church, which also adopted the Conservation Plan in 1980, these extensions only applied to the Conservation Plan area within Fairfax County's jurisdiction.

The six-month extension to June 15, 2006 allowed for a revised draft to be completed and community meetings to be held to obtain additional community input, including recommendations that are presented in the final revised Plan. Input was also obtained from the District Supervisor's office and appropriate County agencies such as the Department of Planning and Zoning. Coordination with the City of Falls Church was also undertaken, since a part of the original Conservation Area lay in the City of Falls Church. This plan is an update of the original plan. The effectiveness of the controls, regulations, and standards of the original Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan (Attachment 1) from December 8, 1980 all remain in effect unless superseded by this updated plan.



## Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 is the preservation and development of viable communities by providing funds to localities to meet a series of objectives, which include;

1. the elimination and prevention of blighting influences, deteriorating property, and declining neighborhoods;
2. the elimination of conditions detrimental to health, safety and public welfare;
3. the provision of decent housing and a suitable living environment;
4. the expansion and improvement of the quantity and quality of community services and public facilities; and
5. a more rational utilization of land and natural resources.

Funds allocated under the Community Development Block Grant Program can be spent for a variety of activities including the acquisition of property for rehabilitation or for public use, the construction of public facilities and utility systems, the rehabilitation of individual homes, the provision of public services, and the planning and administration costs associated with these activities. Under this framework of eligible activities and general objectives set by the Federal Government, a more definitive set of goals and objectives has been developed for the James Lee community.

Accordingly, the original program proposed that the basic goal of the Neighborhood Improvement Program was the preservation of a viable residential community. The intent of community improvement was defined by five goals – namely, to:

1. Develop a Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan.
2. Improve the quality of life of the existing residents through the implementation of a comprehensive public improvements strategy.
3. Strengthen the residential base of the community by improving the quality of the housing stock.
4. Provide residents the opportunity to obtain suitable affordable housing within their income means.
5. Encourage an ongoing process of citizen participation to ensure active community involvement in the planning process.

Currently, the Neighborhood Improvement Program is being amended to include the following goals – namely, to:

1. Provide additional green space, pocket parks and passive recreational space within the community on underutilized public property in the neighborhood, where available.
2. Encourage future land use that discourages high density commercial business in the community and the encroachment and/or expansion of commercial business which is incompatible with the residential community.

Efforts to achieve these seven comprehensive goals for the community have been and can be made more specific by identifying a number of objectives, which the Neighborhood Improve-

ment Program has been and should continue to be designed to meet. These objectives are grouped below in six categories, as follows:

**General:**

- Ensure that plans for each project within the community support the overall program goals,
- Establish a set of development and design standards to encourage high standards of quality in the provision of future improvements.

**Land Use:**

- Conserve the James Lee neighborhood and provide for new residential development at densities compatible with the community. A majority of the Conservation Plan is zoned at R4, which provides for single family detached dwellings at a density not to exceed four (4) dwelling units per acre.
- Promote housing types and development patterns which can minimize the cost of housing and preserve a maximum amount of open space.
- Avoid possible adverse effects of improper or excessive commercial development.
- Stimulate the private rehabilitation of existing dwellings and continue to ensure that the improvements are enduring and of high quality.

**Environment:**

- Improve the maintenance program of the roads, sidewalks and stormwater drainage systems to provide for more efficient removal of surface water, especially on Costner Drive, the 2700 block of Annandale Road, Annandale Road and Sampson Street.
- Discourage trash dumping on vacant land and provide for the removal and clean up of any areas with litter and trash.
- Improve existing recreational facilities where appropriate.
- Install a playground for elementary school age children at the James Lee Community Center.
- Develop new passive recreational facilities as appropriate.
- Increase the amount of public green space, public gardening space and pocket parks.
- Ensure handicapped accessibility throughout the community center site, including the tot lot, parking areas, etc.
- Encourage business, especially those that are gateways into the community, to keep property clean and to maintain a positive visual appearance.
- Improve the Tripps Run through better drainage and improved mosquito control.

**Social:**

- Encourage the use of existing community service programs, and provide for the improvement of programs where deficient.
- Provide housing opportunities for a broad range of income and age groups.
- Promote the expansion of public and private social programs for the residents of the area.
- Minimize the impact of the tax burden on residents of low or fixed incomes by

encouraging all eligible citizens to utilize the County's or the City's real estate tax relief programs available in both jurisdictions.

- Continue to encourage local citizen leadership and participation in any additional upgrading of the area and in the decision-making process of this plan.
- Encourage existing residents of the area to remain.
- Promote programs to ensure the protection and safety of the residents and their properties.
- Encourage residents who are 65 and older, or permanently and totally disabled, and meet the income and asset eligibility requirements to take advantage of the County's real estate tax relief.

#### **Neighborhood Facilities:**

- As appropriate, improve existing community facilities and provide for new facilities.
- Ensure that all citizens in the area are compensated within the requirements of Federal and State law for any federally-funded public actions concerning their real property or households.

#### **Traffic and Circulation:**

- As appropriate, continue to work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to improve the safety, conditions, and maintenance of the road and storm drainage system.
- As appropriate, continue to develop a comprehensive program for pedestrian circulation in the community that will provide safe and easy access to the community center, parks, and other neighborhood facilities, by constructing more sidewalks, trails, and bicycle paths.
- Develop a program to provide safety features to slow traffic and discourage cut-through traffic on Douglas Avenue and Brice Street.

#### **Recommendations**

The Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan were approved by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (hereinafter referred to as the Authority) on October 21, 1980, and adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on December 8, 1980, and the Falls Church Council on November 10, 1980. The Authority and the City of Falls Church (hereinafter referred to as the City) entered into a cooperation agreement dated June 7, 1976, as amended on November 18, 1977, and further amended in 1979 to implement such programs as these.

#### **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

A major component of the original Neighborhood Improvement Program was a program to upgrade, replace and construct new public facilities meeting current codes and standards. The public improvement projects were developed with participation by members of the James Lee Neighborhood Improvement Task Force and community at large, who helped identify and provide solutions for community problems. A Master Plan for Public Improvements was developed first which addressed the types of projects that were needed and desired by the



community and which delineated the project phases. Following is a description of public improvement projects:

### Public Improvement Projects

Following is a description of the projects proposed for the Neighborhood Improvement Program. Those projects were undertaken in stages throughout the life of the program. Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding as well as County General Funds and General Obligation Bonds were used for the projects listed below.

#### A. Circulation Plan and Improvements

##### 1. Traffic Safety Improvements

The Circulation Plan included studies of street intersections which presented existing or potential circulation conflicts, particularly those with high traffic volumes and narrow rights of way and those with visual blind spots.

##### 2. Sidewalk Construction

Sidewalks were constructed as part of the neighborhood improvement projects throughout the community on every street where the property owners requested them.

#### B. Storm Drainage Improvements

Storm drainage improvements were constructed as part of the neighborhood improvement projects throughout the community on every street where the road, curb and gutter improvements were installed.

#### C. Community Center

The James Lee Community Center has been renovated and expanded to include a 23,000 square foot addition. The school renovation provided for the expansion of existing social and recreation programs operated by the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services, for programs operated by the Northern Virginia Literacy Council, as well as for space for the Park Authority's Archaeology Services division. The newly renovated community center also houses a new senior center, teen center, day care center, fitness center, arts and crafts area, community theatre, multipurpose recreational complex, commercial kitchen, administrative offices, and storage space. In addition, site improvements included additional parking, landscaping, exterior lighting, road frontage improvements along School Lane, renovation of the athletic fields, tennis courts, multipurpose court and tot lot.

#### Neighborhood Improvement Program

From the beginning, the foundation of the Neighborhood Improvement Program was based on community input, participation, consensus, support and feedback. The main purpose of the program was to preserve and improve this older, yet stable residential community of predominantly single family homes, to prevent it from becoming deteriorated, to stabilize

property values, to maintain the stock of moderately priced housing, and to prevent the encroachment of commercial development into the area.

As a start, a circulation plan and master plan were prepared with community participation for the area in the early 1980's. In addition, throughout the 1980's, numerous renovations were made to the community center, including the installation of a commercial kitchen, storage facility, gymnasium, playgrounds and tot lots, as well as parking lot and incidental site improvements.

The neighborhood improvement program itself was developed with a great deal of community participation from the early 1980's and implemented over a twenty-year period, with the last phase being completed in 2004. The projects consisted of community planning, engineering design, land acquisition primarily of easements and dedications, and construction of four phases of road and storm drainage improvements throughout the community. As part of the projects, utilities were not only relocated but were also replaced, upgraded and improved. In addition, sidewalks were provided on streets where the property owners wanted them. A fifth phase was designed, and included three privately-owned streets - namely, Clearview Drive, Random Road, and Scipio Lane, but was not constructed due to insufficient land rights.

The four phases of neighborhood improvements were as follows:

Phase I consisted of road, storm drainage and sidewalk improvements on Sampson Street, Costner Drive and along Annandale Road, and was completed in 1988.

Phase II consisted of road and storm drainage improvements on Tinner Hill Road, and was completed in 1990.

Phase III consisted of road and storm drainage improvements on Brice Street, Liberty Avenue and Douglas Avenue, and was completed in 1994.

Phase IV consisted of road and storm drainage improvements on Harriett Street and James Lee Street, and was completed in 2004. School Lane had been included in this project phase, but was omitted at the requests of property owners' residing on that street.

Upon completion of each project phase, the roadways were accepted into the state roadway system for ownership and continued maintenance. Three of the roads in James Lee are unimproved private roads. They are Scipio Lane, Random Road, and Clearview Drive. In order for these roads to have been improved with public funds, the roads had to remain open to the public for public street purposes, necessitating agreement by 100% of the property owners, which could not be obtained.

## **LAND USE AND HOUSING**

### **Land Use**

The basic concept of the Neighborhood Improvement Program is to continue to preserve James Lee as a residential community, to prevent the area from deteriorating physically, and to provide for its improvement in the future. In order to accomplish the objectives, it is recommended that existing land uses be preserved, and that future housing development including infill development in the community be at the same general density as the existing neighborhood. For this reason, the Conservation Plan is based on the densities and uses defined in the County Comprehensive Plan and its amendments, other County ordinances and codes, and the City of Falls Church Comprehensive Plan.

In certain areas, therefore, it is recommended that infill development of vacant land should be at the same or similar residential use. This would encourage new construction at a level which would not negatively impact traffic or increase parking problems within the community, and that would maintain the quality of life for existing residents. This recommendation is in conformance with the Neighborhood Improvement Program objectives of encouraging increased housing opportunities; providing for new residential development at densities compatible with the community, yet which adequately reflect existing land values and locational advantages; and promoting housing types and development patterns which can limit the cost of housing and yet preserve an adequate amount of open space. It is also recommended that any new commercial or office uses be confined to the business district along Washington Street and Hillwood Avenue. Institutional uses, such as schools, parks, churches, etc., shall remain as currently designated.

These recommendations are in response to the expressed desires of the community and in response to the Neighborhood Improvement Program objective of preserving the area as a sound and viable residential community. Furthermore, they are consistent with the Area I Comprehensive Plan recommendation that James Lee remain a "predominantly residential community". The recommendations are also consistent with the City of Falls Church Comprehensive Plan which establishes a general policy to maintain the City's basic residential character.

### **Excerpt from the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2003 Edition, Jefferson Planning District, Amended through 12-6-2004, J1-Hillwood Community Planning Sector**

(For the most current version of this section of the Plan please visit  
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/area1/jefferson.pdf>)

### **CHARACTER**

The Hillwood Community Planning Sector generally extends from the intersection of Hillwood Avenue and Arlington Boulevard at Seven Corners to Tripps Run which forms the western boundary.

The eastern portion of the sector lies within the Seven Corners Community Business Center (CBC). South Street serves as a barrier between the stable residential neighborhoods to the west and the CBC. Housing is largely comprised of single-family detached units. A substantial area of multi-family housing is located west of Cherry Street. The remainder of the sector is stable and in predominantly single-family residential uses. There is a mix of commercial, institutional and high density residential uses along the Route 50 and the Annandale Road corridors, and along the Falls Church City line. Jefferson Village Shopping Center is located at the intersection of Route 50 and Annandale Road. A commercial strip with primarily retail uses extends along the Route 50 service drive between Jefferson Village and the Seven Corners CBC. Many of these retail uses are located in houses converted to commercial uses.

The western boundary of the sector is a channelized segment of the Tripps Run stream valley. The southern portion of the stream valley has been acquired by the County.

#### James Lee Conservation Area

The James Lee community is located adjacent to the City of Falls Church, west of the Seven Corners Shopping Center. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Falls Church City Council approved and adopted the Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan in December 1980. The Conservation Area is generally bounded by Hillwood Avenue on the north, Tripps Run stream valley on the west, Whittier Intermediate School, and Hillwood Square Apartments on the east, Clearview Drive on the southeast, and James Lee Street on the southwest. The Conservation Plan was developed in order to reverse the trend toward deterioration and to preserve the assets of the James Lee neighborhood. It includes recommendations on storm drainage, street lighting, and road improvements.

#### Hillwood Community Improvement Area

On November 24, 1986, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Hillwood Community Improvement Plan to upgrade and preserve this neighborhood by installing curbs and gutters, and making sidewalk, road, and storm drainage improvements. Homeowners participated in the design of improvements and shared in the cost. The area is generally bounded by Hillwood Avenue, South Street, Route 50, and Cherry Street.

### CONCEPT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Concept for Future Development recommends the areas of Hillwood Planning Sector develop in Suburban Neighborhoods.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Land Use

The Hillwood sector is largely developed as stable residential neighborhoods. Infill development in these neighborhoods should be of a compatible use, type and intensity in

accordance with the guidance provided by the Policy Plan under Land Use Objectives 8 and 14.

Where substantial parcel consolidation is specified, it is intended that such consolidations will provide for projects that function in a well-designed, efficient manner and provide for the development of unconsolidated parcels in conformance with the Area Plan.

Figure 8 indicates the geographic location of land use recommendations for this sector. Where recommendations are not shown on the General Locator Map, it is so noted.

1. South Street serves as the western boundary of the Seven Corners commercial area. Commercial encroachment into adjacent neighborhoods should be discouraged. [Not shown]
2. The commercial strip along the north side and fronting on Route 50 between Cherry Street and Cleave Road is planned for neighborhood-serving retail and office uses up to .25 FAR. Commercial development should be limited to the present configuration, with the remainder of the strip being maintained as well-buffered stable single-family residential uses. Special use permits and special exceptions in this corridor should generally be discouraged in order to maintain the residential character of the adjacent single-family neighborhood and to prevent commercial encroachment.
3. The present boundary of the commercial area along Annandale Road (north of Route 50) and fronting on the north side of Route 50 should be maintained. This area is planned for community-serving retail uses up to .35 FAR. Substantial buffering should be provided between the residential and non-residential uses. Redevelopment/revitalization of these areas should provide substantial buffering to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Infill development in the single-family detached residential area north of Parcel 50-4((1))28 is planned at 3-4 dwelling units per acre.
4. The area which fronts the north side of Route 50 at the northwest quadrant of Route 50 and Annandale Road, just west of the Jefferson Village Shopping Center is planned for single-family residential with an alternative to convert existing single-family structures to office use. As an option, these parcels (Tax Map 50-4((13))(2)9-14) could be consolidated and redeveloped for townhouse office or low-rise office uses up to .25 FAR, not to exceed 40 feet in height. These parcels should provide a transition to residential development to the north and stabilize the western boundary of the designated commercial area as East Tripps Run Road.
5. Development of the remaining vacant land within and adjacent to the James Lee Conservation Area should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the James Lee Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan.
6. Parcels fronting on Tinnors Hill Road are planned for residential use at 3-4 dwelling units per acre. As an option, residential development at 8-12 dwelling units per acre may be appropriate if the following conditions are met:
  - Consolidation of all parcels fronting on Tinnors Hill Road and adjacent Parcels 50-2((1))6 and 34; and

- Substantial buffering should be provided to mitigate any noise impact from Route 29.

7. Recommendations for the area between Tinnors Hill Road and Tripps Run and the adjacent areas, fronting on the south side of Route 29 are addressed in Sector J9.

8. Tax Map Parcel 50-2((1))29 is planned for residential use at 3 to 4 dwelling units per acre. Abutting this property is Tax Map Parcel 50-2((1))40, which is zoned C-8, the only property located within the James Lee Conservation District zoned commercial. In order to avoid commercial encroachment, there should be no expansion of commercial uses into the adjacent residential areas of the James Lee Conservation Area.

### Transportation

Transportation recommendations for this sector are shown on Figure 9. In some instances, site-specific transportation recommendations are included in the land use recommendations section. The figures show access orientation, circulation plans, interchange impact areas and generalized locations of proposed transit facilities. The recommendations contained in the Area Plan text and maps, the Policy Plan and Transportation Plan map, policies and requirements in the Public Facilities Manual, the Zoning Ordinance, and other standards will be utilized in the evaluation of development proposals.

### Public Facilities

Expand the James Lee Community Center by 6,400 square feet and renovate approximately 3,000 square feet of the existing facility.

### Parks and Recreation

Park and recreation recommendations for this sector are shown on Figure 10. The column "Park Classification" includes existing park facilities. The "Recommendations" column includes entries for both existing and proposed facilities. Prior to developing parkland, the Fairfax County Park Authority initiates a master planning process to determine the appropriate facilities and design for that park. This process involves extensive citizen review and participation. If an existing park is listed but no recommendation appears on that line, it means the park has been developed in accordance with its master plan.

### Trails

Trails planned for this sector are delineated on Figure 11 and on the 1":4,000' Countywide Trails Plan Map which is referenced as Figure 2 in the Transportation element of the Policy Plan and is available at the Maps and Publications Sales Desk. Trails in this sector are an integral part of the overall County system. While some of the segments have already been constructed, the Countywide Trails Plan Map portrays the ultimate system for the sector and the County at large. In addition, the map specifies a classification for each segment, which represents the desired ultimate function and surface type of the trail. Specific construction

requirements are detailed in the Public Facilities Manual.

**Excerpt from the 2005 City of Falls Church Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Chapter, section on South Washington Street Corridor.**

In response to property owner requests to retain the residential nature of this small area, a land use designation change was made on two lots on Tinner's Hill south of South Washington Street. The designation changes are shown in Figure 4-14 as change numbers 1 and 2 from "Business" to "Low Density Residential (4.0)". A Conservation Plan (adopted in Fairfax County in 1980) for the James Lee area states the importance of the preservation of the residential character of this community, and provided another basis for this change. Some of the primary goals of this Conservation Plan are to stabilize the residential community, limit any commercial activity to Hillwood Avenue, and preserve the community's assets.

There is presently no unified development theme for this area and assertive planning measures are needed. The City's Design Guidelines should be followed when redevelopment is considered for this area. The following land use and design recommendations should be adhered to in this area:

- Consolidate lots to accommodate higher density development
- Consider the vacation of Shirley and Gibson Street rights-of-way to increase the land area available for redevelopment. The development that fronts on Gundry Drive, Rollins Street, and South Virginia Avenue, should be effectively buffered from commercial areas.
- Consider the vacation or realignment of South Maple Avenue if redevelopment is proposed that consolidates parcels on both sides of the street.
- Preserve and rehabilitate the cab company structure and triangle bounded by South Washington Street, Annandale Road, and Hillwood Avenue. Streetscape improvements and better screening of the parking lot are recommended for this property.
- Preserve and use effective site planning and landscaping in the vicinity of the Galloway United Methodist Church.
- Retain Tower Square Shopping Center as some type of neighborhood shopping facility, which provides important locally serving commercial activities.
- Promote redevelopment that eliminates stand alone automobile storage facilities.
- Improve pedestrian accessibility with controlled crosswalks at various locations on South Washington Street. Close coordination with Fairfax County is necessary to assure consistency in design and implementation on both sides of South Washington Street.
- Create a consistent design, in terms of building height and design, streetscape improvements, and other aspects of the built environment for parcels located in the City

and in Fairfax County in the South Washington Street corridor.

- Preserve historic resources in the Tinner's Hill area.
- Create development to promote a positive image of the City as part of a gateway.
- Locate buildings as close to South Washington Street as possible with parking located in the rear or on the sides of buildings or in structured facilities.
- Achieve consistent architectural goals (building materials, window types, roof overhangs, roof pitch, and porches).

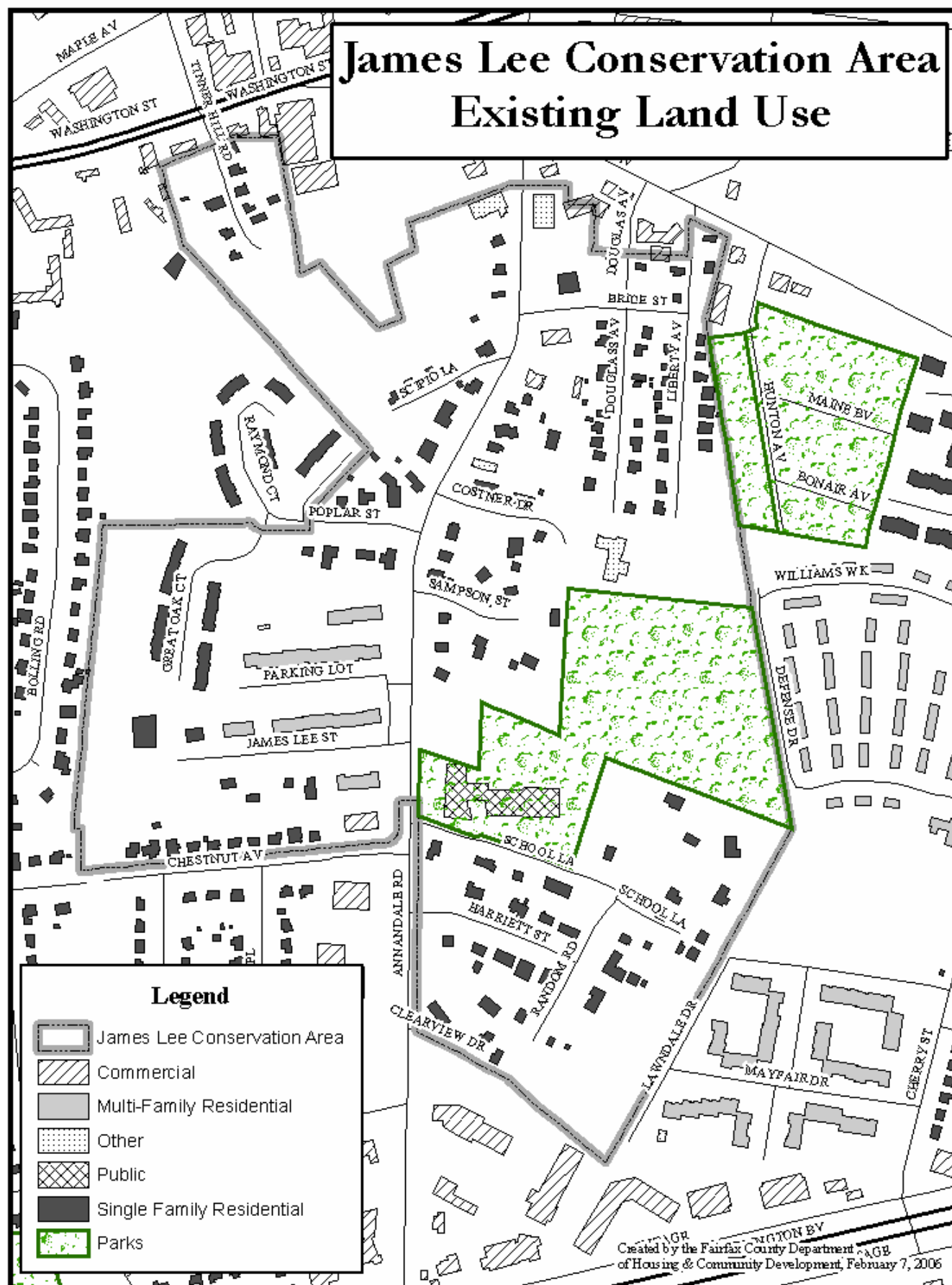


**James Lee Conservation Area  
Existing Zoning**

**Legend**

- James Lee Conservation Area
- Zoning Boundaries

Created by the Fairfax County Department of Housing & Community Development, February 7, 2006



## Housing

### Home Improvement Loan Program

Housing rehabilitation is an essential part of maintaining older neighborhoods as desirable residential communities. As a central part of the Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan, the County, the Authority and the City will work to upgrade and to stabilize the existing residential neighborhood through the provision of home improvement loans, including deferred trusts with no monthly payments if the homeowner qualifies. The loan is repaid when the house is sold, the title is transferred or the home is refinanced. These loans are provided using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

The County undertook repeated efforts of outreach in the community. As documented in the original James Lee Conservation Plan, in April, 1979, a windshield survey of the structural conditions of the housing in the James Lee community was conducted indicating that slightly over 50% of the single-family houses in the area were need of some repair. A windshield survey conducted in January, 2006 (referred to later in this document) revealed that only approximately 10% of the housing stock was found to be in need of repair. The Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP) has helped bring this figure down. Through the years, 19 HILP loans have closed in the James Lee area.

This program is designed to provide for extensive improvements by:

- offering loans which will be within reach of persons of modest income, or at rates which will provide an incentive to participate; and
- enlisting the participation of private lending institutions in order to increase the amount of available capital. At the time of the original Conservation Plan, more than half of the respondents to the James Lee questionnaire were interested in home improvement loans and/or grants. Home maintenance and repair were frequently identified as significant problems, and numerous homes in the area have since been renovated.

### Housing Production

The Authority, under the powers of the Conservation Plan, should continue to assist in the provision of new moderate-priced housing to increase and improve the housing stock available for persons of modest income. The objective has been to encourage developers of vacant land within the community to include moderate-priced housing units of various sizes and types of units, as a part of their respective development plans. The Authority can assist private enterprise in the provision of moderate-priced housing by:

- providing assistance through the Affordable Housing Partnership Program or other Federal and State financing programs for both new construction and rehabilitation;
- working directly with area lending institutions getting financing for qualified projects

The infusion of new residential housing in the Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate neighborhood will further serve to attain the goal of developing a viable community as well as ensuring the permanence of the community.

## Historic Preservation

Community residents have expressed an interest in the preservation of the historical features of the area, specifically the preservation of the cemeteries located behind Galloway Methodist Church and Second Baptist Church. It is recommended that such preservation activities be pursued under the Neighborhood Improvement Program in order to preserve and enhance the historical character of James Lee. In addition the neighborhood would like to include the Third Baptist Church, with the consultation of the church, for consideration of placement in the County's Inventory of Historic Sites.

## Implementation

The primary responsibility for the implementation of the program rested with the citizens of James Lee. It was essential that residents undertook the upgrading of their own neighborhood concurrent with the public improvement projects. The activities of the County, the Authority, and the City were designed to be supportive of individual actions, and to provide an impetus for continuing citizen involvement in the program. These public activities were limited to the following:

1. The installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, parking facilities, playgrounds, public buildings, and other public facilities essential to the Neighborhood Improvement Program.
2. The provision of assistance to property owners or occupants within the Conservation Area to improve their property by providing loans and grants directed toward the prevention and elimination of blight.
3. The acquisition of property for the purpose of rehabilitating housing or providing a public use, such as a public green space, parks or sidewalks. Acquisition was limited by Section V of the Conservation Plan for the County only. Transactions between an owner and the Authority were to have been on the basis of voluntary agreement. The use of eminent domain powers by the Authority were limited to acquiring properties located in the Fairfax County portion of the Conservation Area for the uses as permitted under Title 36 of the Code of Virginia. The Authority could buy and rehabilitate property offered to it by private owners, and then sell the property on the open market to persons who would reside in the structure for a least one (1) year. New development would, of course, be allowed to occur through normal actions of the private sector, but all development would take place within the framework of the Conservation Plan and established planning and zoning so that new development would be compatible with and beneficial to the entire community. All property owners or occupants would receive the full benefits where applicable of the Federal Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, as applicable, and state law including fair market value of all property acquired as established by independent appraisal.
4. The disposition of land or improvements to further the objectives of the Neighborhood Improvement Program. Cooperation between the County and the City of Falls Church and the Authority was to expand the funding options available to implement the Neighborhood Improvement Program. This would have made it possible to increase the sources of funding for public improvements and extend credit to private property owners.

One or more of the following sources of funding would be used to implement the projects described above.

- Federal and State grant funds, including but not limited to Community Development Block Grant funds;
- Bonds and notes issued by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority;
- Bonds and notes issued by the County or the City of Falls Church in accordance with applicable laws;
- Appropriation of County or City general revenues; and
- General Obligation Bonds.

Through the provision of community facilities and home improvement loans, the area would be enhanced by the voluntary participation of its residents and the private market.

#### Coordination and Responsibilities of Public Agencies

The County, the City, and all their agencies, authorities, boards, and commissions will cooperate with and assist the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority in the implementation of the Falls Church, James Lee, Southgate Neighborhood Improvement Program and Conservation Plan, as provided in Section III of the Conservation Plan, as amended. The County and the City of Falls Church shall carry out those activities for which each is legally enabled and which constitute its usual function. All other activities called for in the Program and Plan which cannot be carried out by the County and the City shall be the responsibility of the Authority. Overall coordination of the implementation of the Program, including coordination with the State and its agencies, shall be the responsibility of the Executive Secretary of the Authority, who is also the County Executive, where activities are solely within the county, and shall include coordination efforts by the City where appropriate. The County Executive works under the direction of the Board of Supervisors and the Authority, through the Department of Housing and Community Development. Coordination as it involves the City shall be the responsibility of the City Manager under the direction of the City Council and through the appropriate City Department.

Of particular benefit to the James Lee community will be coordination between the County and the City involving shared concerns. These concerns include zoning and policing to help protect the neighborhood.

#### EXISTING CONDITIONS

##### A. Housing in Need of Repair

On January 19, 2006, staff of the Department of Housing and Community Development conducted a windshield survey of the James Lee Conservation Area to assess the physical condition of the existing housing stock and the need for the continuation of the Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP). The survey revealed that approximately ten percent (10%) of the housing stock may require the type of improvements which are eligible under the program. The actual need may vary as HILP also includes various interior improvements and HILP

applicants must have incomes which fall below the Fairfax County median income for family size.

## B. Lower Income Levels and Property Values

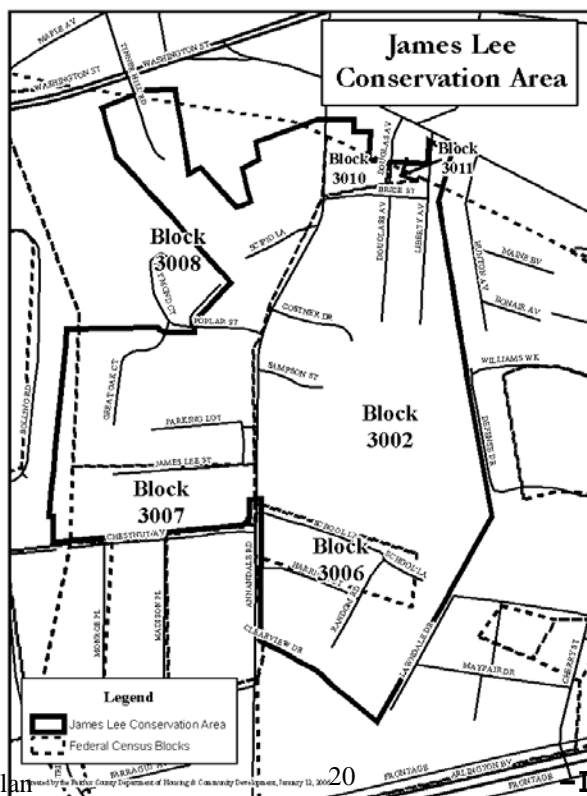
The trend of lower median family income levels in the James Lee area compared to the rest of the County has continued from 1970 through 2000. According to the 2000 Census, the median family income for the James Lee area was \$48,854, considerably lower than all of Fairfax County at \$92,146 or all of the City of Falls Church at \$97,225. In addition, compared to Fairfax County or Falls Church as a whole, housing values in the James Lee area have been significantly lower. The 2000 Census showed that the median housing value for owner-occupied units in the James Lee area is \$158,800, compared to \$233,300 for the County as a whole and \$277,100 for the City of Falls Church.

## C. Types of Housing

According to the 2000 Census, approximately\* 1,392 people live in the James Lee area and occupy 487 of the 504 housing units for an average household size of 2.6. Additionally, 61% of the residents own their home compared to the 39% who rent.

Blocks	3002	3006	3007	3008	3010	3011	Total
Population	532	19	120	719	0	2	1,392
# Housing Units	220	4	36	243	0	1	504
Owner Occupied	118	3	27	150	0	1	299
Renter Occupied	90	1	8	89	0	0	188
Average Household Size	2.56	4.75	3.43	3.01	0	2.0	2.625

\*Census Blocks do not follow the boundaries of the James Lee Conservation Plan (see map)



## **PROPOSED PROJECTS**

### **1) Tinner Hill Cultural Center – A Community-Proposed Project**

The Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation, Inc. plans to construct the Tinner Hill Cultural Center on a site consisting of two ¼ acre lots that lie in both the City of Falls Church and Fairfax County. The site is located at 106 and 108 Tinner Hill Road. The purpose of the Cultural Center is to portray the issues and lives of African-Americans who lived through the time period in the United States when Jim Crow laws and segregation were present and when African-Americans responded by demanding that their civil rights be honored.

Two primary buildings are being planned. The main building will reflect the architecture of the Joseph Tinner home. Its function will be that of a museum and educational facility, a meeting space for discussions of civil rights issues, a social events gathering place, and office space for the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation. The second building will be a performance center, designed to look like a 1915-era rural barn on the outside. Inside, the center will contain a fully-equipped stage for the performing arts. Barn activities will also include a stage for outdoor concerts, living history, and lectures; utilizing the indoor space for a practice and work area for small groups to use for rehearsals; and having the indoor area function as a small exhibit hall.

The site where the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation is planning to build the Cultural Center is designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia as one of 31 African-American historical sites in Virginia. It is the site of the home of Joseph Tinner, a stonemason, and is where the first rural branch in the United States of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P) met in 1915. A new segregation law had been passed by the Town of Falls Church that required African-Americans to live in a small area of town, while white Americans could live in most of the town. The group of African-Americans that met developed a legal strategy to abolish the law. Risking their lives and livelihoods during this time of racial tension, this group fought for the principles of civil rights with the result that the law was ultimately revoked. The Falls Church branch of the N.A.A.C.P. grew and helped organize other branches throughout Northern Virginia and the rural South. Prior to the Civil War, the site was also a home to slaves of the Dulany Plantation.

A study should be completed to determine if new infrastructure facilities or expansion or the upgrade of existing infrastructure should be completed in anticipation of the construction and opening of the Tinner Hill Heritage Cultural Center. Increased automobile traffic on a daily basis is not anticipated.

### **2) Establishment of Pocket Parks and Community Trails**

The James Lee Conservation Area could potentially benefit from some additional amenities, including pocket parks, community parks, and community trails for walking and biking. Assuming property owner concurrence and the ability to obtain necessary land rights and maintenance agreements, mini or pocket parks could be developed on vacant parcels within the Conservation Area that have been declared uneconomic remnants from real property acquisition

for the neighborhood improvement project phases. One such location is the southwest corner of Brice Street and Liberty Avenue in Phase III. Another opportunity for a community park can be seen on the former Williams' property located along Annandale Road between Harriett Street and School Lane, across from the Community Center. Community trails could be constructed as needed throughout the Conservation Area for safer walking and biking, separating pedestrian and vehicular access. Walking and/or biking routes could be extended in various areas, such as from the end of Costner Drive toward the James Lee Community Center, and along Annandale Road in areas where there are no sidewalks, as is the case in the block between Brice Street and Hillwood Avenue. Proposed land uses for the pocket parks could include tot lots green space, and in particular the Williams' property could include a picnic area.

### 3) Continuation of the Home Improvement Loan Program

Fairfax County will continue to offer its Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP) to eligible residents of the Conservation Area. HILP loans, utilizing Community Development Block Grant funds, can take the form of deferred trusts with no monthly payments for qualified homeowners as well as low-interest loans. HILP loans provide opportunities for residents to rehabilitate their individual properties while also accomplishing the larger effect of maintaining the neighborhood as a desirable residential community.

### 4) James Lee Community Center Recreation and Site Improvements

Additional recreational facilities or improvement of current facilities located at James Lee Community Center have been identified by the James Lee/Southgate Civic Association Task Force. A walking trail to begin at the end of Costner Drive and connect the baseball fields and tennis court with the surrounding community is needed. The replacement of a tennis backboard wall that was removed during the renovation of the James Lee Community Center should be undertaken. The installation of a playground for elementary school age children is desperately needed as well. The existing tot lot is in need of accessibility modifications since its relocation during construction of the community center project. Accessibility modifications are needed in various locations around the community center site, parking lot and sidewalks.

### 5) Traffic Safety Improvements

Two intersections were identified by citizens as problem areas. These were the intersections of Annandale Road and Costner Drive, and Brice Street and Annandale Road. Hazardous road conditions have also been identified in front of #2761, #2800, #2767, and #306 Annandale Road. Residents have reported damage caused by automobiles failing to negotiate the sharp curve in the road alignment and public safety issues at Metro bus stops with pedestrians trying to cross the street to catch public transportation. In addition, the neighborhood would like to see a traffic flow study done to identify possible measures, such as signage, street lights, and traffic light operations, to improve traffic safety in the area. In particular, the neighborhood would like to examine the feasibility of a caution or traffic light at the corner of Costner and Annandale Road.

Street crossings should also be provided at points where there is a heavy pedestrian flow and added safety features for people crossing Annandale Road at Metro bus stops and in front of



Galloway United Methodist Church. In particular, the intersection of Washington Street and Tinner Hill Road and the area in front of #306 Annandale Road need crosswalks to provide for pedestrians, especially children, going to and from public transportation or the future cultural center located on Tinner Hill.

### **Cooperation between the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County and Other Agencies and Authorities**

Fairfax County, the City of Falls Church and other local agencies and authorities shall aid and cooperate with the Authority under the powers of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of assisting the development and administration of the Conservation Plan. The City has in existing cooperation agreement with the Authority which has been amended to reflect cooperation in the area of implementation of this Plan. The City will designate the appropriate department to carry out the work in the areas of street improvements and housing rehabilitation for the City.

### **REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS FOR THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH & FAIRFAX COUNTY**

The following controls and regulations relating to land use and building requirements provide guidelines and review procedures which are intended to maximize efforts to preserve the residential character of the Conservation Area. Ingenuity and freedom of design are encouraged for all improvements and new developments as long as they remain consistent with the objectives of the Neighborhood Improvement Program. Unless otherwise stated below, all capital improvement projects will be constructed or improved in accordance with the Conservation Plan, Neighborhood Improvement Program, and all applicable state and local ordinances and codes.

#### **Development Review**

All of the requests, plans and proposals identified below will be forwarded by the County or City to the Authority for appropriate review and comment. Specific procedures have been documented to distinguish the various requirements of the City of Falls Church from those of Fairfax County. The Authority shall follow all regulations, limitations, and time schedules of the County and the City in reviewing and commenting on said documents. The Authority shall work with a committee designated by the Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Civic Association in carrying out all reviews called for in this section of the Conservation Plan.

1. **CITY: Zoning Actions** - As part of the standard review procedure, the City shall provide notice to the Authority of all rezoning requests, special use permit requests or special exception requests for properties that are wholly or partially within the adopted Conservation Area boundaries. Said notice shall be provided at least fifteen (15) days prior to a public hearing on such requests by the City Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals. Following said notice, the Authority will coordinate the review of such requests by the community's Civic Association and will submit appropriate comments to the City Planning Department at or prior to the public

hearing.

All comments submitted by the Authority shall be incorporated into the related reports presented by the City staff to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and the City Council.

COUNTY: Zoning Actions – As part of the standard review procedure the County shall provide notice to the Authority of all rezoning requests, special use permit requests, and special exception requests for properties that are wholly or partially within the adopted Conservation Area boundaries. Said notice shall be provided within one week of the receipt of such requests by the County. Following said notice, the Authority will coordinate the review of such requests by the community's Civic Association and will submit appropriate comments to the County within thirty (30) days. All comments submitted by the Authority shall be incorporated into the related reports presented by the County staff to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

2. CITY: Comprehensive Planning Actions - The City Planning Department shall provide notice to the Authority of all proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments affecting properties within or adjacent to or within 350 feet of the adopted Conservation Area boundaries. Said notice shall be provided no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the consideration of such amendments by the Planning Commission. Following said notice the Authority, with a Civic Association Committee, shall review and provide appropriate comment on the proposed amendments. All such comments shall be incorporated in the related reports submitted by the City staff to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

COUNTY: Comprehensive Planning Actions - The Department of Planning and Zoning, shall provide notice to the Director of the Authority of all proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments affecting properties within or adjacent to or within 350 feet of the adopted Conservation Area boundaries. Said notice shall be provided within thirty (30) days of the acceptance of such requests by the County. Following said notice, the Authority will coordinate the review of such requests by the community's Civic Association and will submit appropriate comments to the County within thirty (30) days. All such comments shall be incorporated in the related reports submitted by the County staff to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

3. CITY: Development and Site Plans - The City Planning Department shall provide notice to the Authority of all site plans within or adjacent to the Conservation Area as well as those within 350 feet of the Conservation Area boundaries. Said notice shall be provided within one week after receipt of such plans by the Planning Department. The Authority, with the Civic Association Committee, shall have the right to review and comment to the City Planning Commission concerning the developer's plans and working drawings, particularly as they are concerned with, but not limited to, site planning, architectural layout, materials to be used in construction, landscaping,

access, advertising and identification signs, and street and sidewalk improvements.

The Authority shall have fifteen (15) days following the receipt of said notice to complete such review and submit appropriate comments. All such comments shall be incorporated in the related reports submitted to the City Council.

COUNTY: Development and Site Plans - The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) shall provide notice to the Authority of all development proposals and site plans within or adjacent to the Conservation Area as well as those within 350 feet of the Conservation Area boundaries. Said notice shall be provided within one week after receipt of such plans by DPWES. The Authority, with the Civic Association Committee, shall have the right to review and comment to DPWES the developer's plans and working drawings particularly as they are concerned with, but not limited to, site planning, architectural layout, materials to be used in construction, landscaping, access, advertising and identification signs, and street and sidewalk improvements.

In conjunction with this review, upon request by the Authority, all proposed subdivision plans and all proposed development and site plans for projects that are within the aforementioned review area shall be submitted to the Authority and the Committee for review and comment. The Authority shall have thirty (30) days following the receipt of said notice to complete such review and submit appropriate comments. All such comments shall be incorporated in the related reports submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

4. CITY AND COUNTY: Public Improvements - The City or the County shall direct that any or all of its respective public agencies which propose projects within Conservation Area boundaries shall provide to the Authority notice of such projects and shall then, upon request of the Authority, provide plans and specifications for the purpose of community review and comment. Said notice shall be provided a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the advertisement for bids for the construction of such projects.

### **Duration of Controls, Regulations, and Standards**

Rehabilitation and new construction within the project area will be subject to the controls, regulations, and standards set out in the Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Plan adopted on December 8, 1980, and to any more restrictive provisions which may be contained in this updated Plan. Any controls imposed in the Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Plan will remain in effect without a termination date until it is revised and adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the City of Falls Church City Council. This plan is to be reviewed for updates by the community every five years from the date of adoption by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the City of Falls Church City Council.

### **Procedure for Plan Amendment**

A. All proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Authority for the purpose of holding a public hearing to provide the opportunity for residents in the Conservation Area and all other affected parties to voice their views on the proposal. The Authority shall then submit the amendment and its recommendations to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Falls Church City Council for final action.

B. Any zoning plan, master plan, or Comprehensive Plan amendment that requires an amendment to the Conservation Plan shall upon receiving the recommendations of the Authority after public hearing require only the final action of the governing body in which jurisdiction the subject property is located.

C. All proposed amendments to the Falls Church/James Lee/Southgate Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Plan and any zoning plan, master plan, or Comprehensive Plan amendment shall be brought to the attention of the James Lee Civic Association as well as the adjacent property owners affected by the action.